



The Eucharist: Heart of Justice & Peace

Catechesis for Adult Groups & Youth Ministry

(Part four of a four part series)

From the very beginning, the Church has drawn her life from the Eucharist. This Sacrament is the reason for her existence, the inexhaustible source of her holiness, the power of her unity, the bond of her communion, the source of dynamism in preaching the Gospel, the principle of her evangelizing activity, the font of charity, the heart of human promotion and the anticipation of her glory in the Eternal Banquet at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

Instrumentum Laboris, XI Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops, 2005

Sending Forth

Through the new life which Christ has bestowed on us, we can recognize one another as brothers and sisters, despite every difference of language, nationality and culture. In a word, by sharing in the one bread and the one cup, we come to realize that we are “God’s family” and that together we can make our own effective contribution to building a world based on the values of justice, freedom and peace.

Message for the World Day of Peace, John Paul II, 1/1/2005

Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking of his body and blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The dismissal at the end of each Mass is a charge given to Christians, inviting them to work for the spread of the Gospel and the imbuing of society with Christian values.

The Eucharist gives the community the impulse for a practical commitment to building a more just and fraternal society. In the Eucharist our God has shown love in the extreme, overturning all those criteria of power which too often govern human relations and radically affirming the criterion of service: “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all”. It is not by chance that the Gospel of John contains no account of the institution of the Eucharist, but instead relates the “washing of feet” (Jn 13:1-20): by bending down to wash the feet of his disciples, Jesus explains the meaning of the Eucharist unequivocally, St. Paul vigorously reaffirms the impropriety of a Eucharistic celebration lacking charity expressed by practical sharing with the poor. ...by our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern for those in need, we will be recognized as true followers of Christ (Jn 13:35; Mt 25:31-46). This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged.

Mane Nobiscum Domine,
John Paul II, 2004

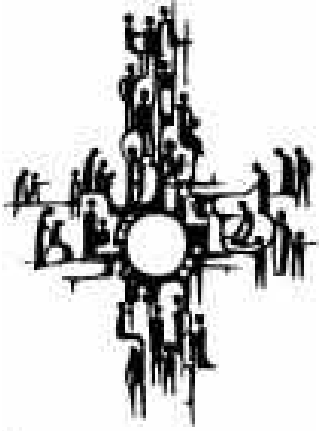
The Eucharist fortifies the Christian sense of living; its celebration is service to God and others as well as a witness in the world to the values contained in the Gospel. In this way, the three dimensions of the Christian life – liturgia, martyria and diakonia – demonstrate a continuity between the Sacrament celebrated and the Sacrament adored, and between the commitment to bear witness to Christ in the temporal order and the communion which is built up through service in charity, especially to the poor. ...fundamental importance needs to be given to the bond between the Eucharist and the construction of a just society through each one’s personal responsibility actively to participate in the Church’s mission in the world.

Instrumentum Laboris, Synod of Bishops, 2004

“The Church lives from the Eucharist”. The Eucharistic celebration is truly at the service of the life in Christ, in the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is necessary to take care to pass from the Eucharist celebrated, to the Eucharist lived; from the mystery that is lived to the renewal of life. Charity, concord and fraternal love are fruits of the Eucharist and manifest the union with Christ that has taken place in the sacrament. The company of Christ among us inspires daily testimony, and furthers the building up of the earthly city. ...The blessing preceding the final dismissal, especially in its solemn formulations, reminds us that we leave the Church building with the mandate to testify to the world... The encounter with Christ is not a talent to be buried, but is meant to bear fruit in both word and work. The mission is to bring Christ into all the different facets of life, of work, and of suffering, so that the Gospel spirit becomes leaven within history and the “project” of human relations be marked by solidarity and peace.

The Year of the Eucharist, Congregation for Divine Worship, 2004





[The Eucharist] spurs us on our journey through history and plants a seed of living hope in our daily commitment to the work before us. Certainly the Christian vision leads to the expectation of “new heavens” and a new earth” (Rev 21:1), but this increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today. I wish to reaffirm this forcefully at the beginning of the new millennium, so that Christians will feel more obliged than ever not to neglect their duties as citizens in this world. Theirs is the task of contributing with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan.

Ecclesia de Eucharistia, John Paul II, 2003

Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached. Discipleship is found in a relationship with Christ and a commitment to His mission of “bringing good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind and setting the downtrodden free.”

Everyday Christianity, USCCB, 2001

Group Reflection

Briefly recollect our journey from being gathered, to the hearing the Word, receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, and now being sent forth. Together as the baptized, we have re-membered, and have been re-membered into a unity through Trinity love and exchange in and with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From this Holy Exchange we hear: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”. Our collective “yes” is “Thanks be to God”

Reflection I (15 minutes)

Having been nourished and strengthened into a reconciled unity, what are some of the elements of our mandate to live the Gospel in our daily lives and work? Break up into small groups, assigning each, one of the statements from the front to help answer this question. Groups may want to dig deeper using the Bible. Have one spokesperson share small group discussion with the whole group, making a list of the elements of faith life on newsprint. Discuss

Reflection II (15 minutes) *Encourage each other daily, while it is still today (Heb. 3:13)*

In union with Christ, we are given a vision of our life of faith and right relationships as good news for us and the world. Using Jesus’ sermon on the mount, what are some of the personal traits of beatitude that will enable us to live out the Gospel mandate we discovered in Reflection I. Break up into small groups, the Sermon (Matthew 5-7), list personal traits and reconvene to share these with the whole group.

Reflection III Pray and food for the journey (15 minutes)

As the One and the Many with individual gifts woven together in grace like a fine tapestry, you are received just as you are with joy and love beyond understanding. Using the prayer on page three, silently read and reflect on one or two Sermon traits, and/or one or two mandates which you desire to make more fully your own in your daily life and work. Make this your prayer to take home for the journey ahead.

Closing: Take the Good News with you as you go today. For our help today, Scripture and Church documents have been summarized into a list of Catholic social teaching. This is the useful tool for living our faith in daily life and work. Practice using this list (page 3) in the weeks ahead.

Preparations

Copies of this teaching for participants
Bibles for each small group
Newsprint

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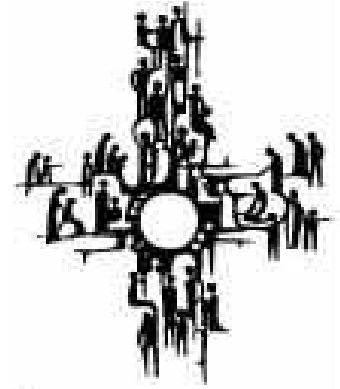
Four Part Series on the Eucharist

As We Gather Liturgy of the Word
Liturgy of the Eucharist Sending Forth



Opening Prayer

A: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
B: And kindle in them the fire of your love.
A: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
B: And you will renew the face of the earth.
All: Lord, by the light of the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.



Give us this Day - Amen

The Spirit of God rests upon me.
The Spirit of God consecrates me.
The Spirit of God bids me go forth to proclaim his peace, his joy.

The Spirit of God sends me forth,
Called to witness the kingdom of Christ among all the nations;
Called to proclaim the good news of Christ to the poor.
My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

The Spirit of God sends me forth,
Called to witness the kingdom of Christ among all the nations;
Called to console the hearts overcome with great sorrow.
My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

The Spirit of God sends me forth,
Called to witness the kingdom of God among all the nations;
Called to comfort the poor who mourn and who weep.
My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

The Spirit of God sends me forth,
Called to witness the kingdom of God among all the nations;
Called to announce the grace of salvation to all.
My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

The Spirit of God sends me forth,
Called to witness the kingdom of Christ among all the nations;
Called to reveal the glory of God among all the people.
My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

Lucien Deiss, C.S., Sp., 1970
Liturgy of the Hours, Pentecost, pg. 1018 Vol. II

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Dignity of the Human Person – All people are sacred, made in the image of likeness of God.
Call to Family and Community Participation – People have a right to participate in community, seeking together the common good. Family is the cell of community.
Solidarity – We are one human family, called to work locally & globally for justice.
Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers – Work is a form of participating in God's creation.
Preferential Option for the Poor & Vulnerable – We share what God has given for all of us.
Human Rights and Responsibilities – All have fundamental rights needed for human life. All have a responsibility to respect the rights of others and work for the common good.
Care for the Earth – We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord!